

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION X

IDAHO OPERATIONS OFFICE
422 W. WASHINGTON ST.
BOISE, IDAHO 83702



REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

October 25, 1991

FILE NOTE

SUBJECT: Report of Discharge - Cypress Thompson Creek
NPDES Permit # ID-002540-2

FROM: Joe Wallace *W*
Environmental Engineer, IOO

On 10/24/91 at 3:35 pm, Bert Doughty, the Supervisor of Environmental Affairs for Cypress called the IOO to report that a high concentration of Mercury was detected at the Pat Hughes Creek outfall #002 at the Thompson Creek Mine. Bert said that a Mercury concentration of .0148 ppm (mg/l) was detected by routine sample analysis on 9/16/91. On subsequent sampling, Bert reported another high Mercury concentration of .003 ppm (mg/l) on 10/1/91 from the same outfall. Their maximum daily NPDES permit limit for Mercury is .0002 mg/l.

Cypress recently requested (5/21/91) and received approval to route the water collecting in their open pit Molybdenum Mine through the outfall #002 at Pat Hughes Creek. Normally, this water would be pumped into their tailings pond. But since they shut down their milling operation, they are no longer able to continue the construction of the tailings pond dike and did not want to increase the impounded volume for fear of overtopping the dike. They plan to resume milling (and dike construction) by 11/1/91.

Bert said that the water in the pit was also sampled on the dates of concern and the test results showed acceptable Mercury concentrations of .0002 ppm (mg/l) on both occasions. Bert said he did not know why the readings were so high at outfall #002.

Bert stated that as of 10/24/91, the pit dewatering would be discharged into the tailings pond until things got straightened out.

cc: Don Gibbins, IOO
Lisa Macchio, WD-134